

# Her Our Mouth.

"TOM RAFFLES, GUNNER."

He Was a Boy's Hero, After All—  
By William Murray Graydon.

When Tom Raffles took the queen's shillings at St. George's barracks in Trafalgar Square, and found himself duly enlisted for Indian service, he believed that his career was made.

He pictured the day when he would return to his native Norfolk village, wearing an officer's uniform and the Victoria cross. This was a foolish dream, but the twenty-nine years had been spent entirely in the country.

Tom was a genial fellow, with many good traits, and the blind bravery of a blind fanatic. Under different circumstances, all that was best in him might have come to the front. But he went to India in a time of peace. The Burmese invasion was recently over, and even the turbulent hill tribes were quiet. There seemed nothing to do but stagnate or take what offered in the way of recreation. The former was impossible to a man of Tom's temperament. He fell among bad companions, and became addicted to drinking, gam-

bling, and a host of minor evils. His popularity increased among the men in proportion to his bad record among the officers.

At the end of a year, Tom Raffles was considered the worst scoundrel in the regiment—in all India, some did not scruple to say. Half his time was spent in the regimental house, or doing extra duty. More than once he tried to reform, but failed. Then he became reckless, and took life on the fatalist theory.

In three years he served at as many different military stations. Then the heavy battery—for Tom was a gunner—was transferred to Lahore, away up in the Punjab. There were rumors of a revolt among the Black Mountain tribes, and the prospect of active service led Tom to make another resolution of good behavior. At first two things were in his favor. The cantonments were three miles from the bustling city of Lahore, and the atmosphere there was healthy and bracing. The officer, under whose command the battery now came, was Colonel Stratford, a right martinet, but with a just man. His effects were centered upon his 17-year-old son Bertie.

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SULTAN OBEYED.

who had recently come out from England. Bertie was as handsome and plucky a lad as one could wish to see. He did pretty much as he chose, and was idolized by officers and men alike.

Bertie immediately struck up an acquaintance with Tom Raffles, and it speedily ripened into friendship. Both hailed from Norfolkshire, and they had many reminiscences about sailing and fishing on the famous "Broads."

Raffles believed that Bertie was ignorant of his bad reputation, as no allusion was ever made to the subject. He would have been speedily undeceived had he overheard some of the lectures that the lad received from the colonel. However, for very shame that his young friend should learn the truth, Raffles behaved himself admirably for a whole month. The colonel was warmly pleased. He sometimes allowed Bertie to ride on Raffles' gun-carriage behind the two elephants.

But evil days were coming. Bertie went north to Ramal Pindi on a visit, and the next day it was reported officially that the Black Mountain tribes were not going to fight.

This double blow was too much for Raffles. At first he became despondent. Then he listened to temptation, and drifted back to his old habits. He plunged with a zest into all the evils and dissipation of the Lahore beggars, and paid for his fun by reprimands, confinement and hard duty.

Then came the crowning offense. In a freak of madness, induced by intoxication, he surreptitiously borrowed an officer's uniform and horse one dark night, and rode out to the canton-

ment. This meant court martial, and Raffles resigned himself to the inevitable during the week that he lay in a dark cell.

Then it happened that the governor-general and his staff came north on a tour of inspection. A grand review and maneuvers were ordered at Lahore cantonments.

Colonel Stratford was in a quandary. He had no gunner whom he could trust to fill Raffles' place on so important an occasion. Raffles had even more control over the two elephants than their native drivers. Sultana, the leader, was greatly attached to him. So, rather than run the risk of spoiling the review, the colonel decided to establish a military precedent by granting Raffles a short leave of absence from his confinement.

At sunrise on the appointed day a scene before the cantonments was a scene of martial glory. Bodies of cavalry and infantry moved to and fro amid a sparkle of arms and equipment. The heavy battery came last—six polished guns mounted by six proud and sturdy gunners. Each gun carriage was drawn by two burly elephants, and on top of each elephant was a turbaned Hindoo with a steel prod in his hand. The elephants were led by men with folded arms. Under the circumstances such a public exposure was not to his taste.

At last the governor-general and staff arrived from Lahore and the ceremonies began. A certain order was given to the heavy battery and just as they fell into position, a gun carriage leapt upon Raffles' gun carriage. Raffles wished that he could sink out of sight. His face turned red and purple. "I thought you were at Ramal Pindi," he stammered. "I came back last night," replied Bertie. "I say, Raffles, I'm awfully sorry for you. Whatever possessed you?"

"I'm afraid you'll get in trouble for this," interrupted Raffles, pretending not to understand. "The colonel will be furious to see an outsider on a gun carriage at such a time. Why, we're right in the middle of the review."

"He don't see me yet," said Bertie. "He's too much taken with his ship. Anyway, I can't jump off now." This was true, since the battery was trundling along at a rapid gait. Raffles accepted the situation without further comment.

"I wouldn't have gone away if I had known you were going to break out again," Bertie resumed. "We all thought you were reformed. Now look where you are. Won't you promise, for my sake, to do better when your punishment is over?"

"Too late," muttered Raffles. "I'm in for a long term, and then I'll be dismissed from the service." His voice quavered pitifully.

"But suppose I can help you?" exclaimed Bertie. "What if I persuade father not to have you dismissed?"

"If you save me from that," declared Raffles, earnestly, "and gain me another chance, I'll never break a rule as long as I live."

"That's a bargain," cried Bertie, and then ended the conversation, for the guns had now reached stony ground, and were making a prodigious clatter. As they rode along, Raffles received the slim chances of an appeal to the colonel and the gleam of hope faded from his face. But he did not know what the day was to bring forth.

The battery was performing a circular movement which was to bring it in triumph past the governor-general and staff. It was now on the opposite side of the drive, and close to the tracks of the Peninsular railway.

Just as the leading gun-carriage veered off to left, the fast express train from Peshawar came dashing along with a long line of bells and hissing steam. Of the whole twelve elephants, but two were unaccustomed to the railway. Sultana and Nabob, who drew Raffles' gun, both hated and feared the steam cars. They reared and plunged, and trumpeted shrilly. Then, mid with terror and deaf to the explanations and pleading of the native mahouts, they broke out of line and dashed up a rocky hill side, straight away from the reviewing staff and the rest of the force.

The disaster was instantly observed.



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There was no lack of discipline. The battery halted, and its commanding officer spurred after the fugitives on a special order, at the head of a troop of cavalry charged over the plain. The ambulance corps wisely followed.

"This is serious, Stratford," said the governor-general. "I know what mad elephants are. The brutes will likely plunge over yonder bluff." Poor Raffles, through his field glasses, he added: "There is someone on the carriage beside the gunner."

"The colonel took the glasses with a shivering hand. 'It is Bertie,' he gasped; and digging the spurs into his horse he was off like a whirlwind. Meanwhile the huge, panic-stricken elephants had actually pinned on their pursuers as they strode recklessly up the hill, over rocks, bushes, and everything that came in their way. Raffles realized the danger. He had but one thought—how to save Bertie.

The lad's first impulse was to jump, but Raffles caught and held him. "You'll break your neck if you try that," he cried. "Trust to me. I'll save you." Side by side they clung to the narrow seat. It was almost a miracle that they were not pitched off. Finding they could do nothing with the maddened brutes, both officers jumped at the same instant. One poor fellow struck head first on a rock and never moved. The other landed in some bushes but he was not far enough out of the way. He uttered a piercing scream as the heavy wheels rolled over his leg.

Bertie shrieked and clung tighter to his companion. The elephants dashed on faster than ever. Just ahead was the top of the hill. The other side dropped down to a beautiful sough for a whole month. The colonel was warmly pleased. He sometimes allowed Bertie to ride on Raffles' gun-carriage behind the two elephants.

reach the verge. In vain he shouted to Sultana. He looked back at the pursuing horsemen. No hope of aid there.

Then Tom remembered that a road lay along the brow of the hill, and finally turned down to the river bank at a point where the slope was not so precipitous. Like a flash he formed a desperate resolve.

"Hold tight, my lad," he said. "I'm going to leave you. If it comes to the worst, jump off before we go over the bluff. Do you understand?"

Bertie nodded. There was a grim and plucky expression on his pallid face.

The next instant an agile spring loaded Raffles. Nabob's back. By clinging to the stout harness he worked his way forward. A second spring carried him over the gap between the two elephants, and he was quickly perched on Sultana's neck.

Fortunately the mahout had left the prod sticking in the harness. With this Raffles belabored the unruly brutes, and strove to turn him to one side. He stormed and threatened and called him by name. For a minute of keen suspense the issue trembled in the balance. Then, with a sudden jerk, Sultana obeyed the prod and swung to the left into the road. Raffles waved his hand. Bertie held tight.

"Stick tight, lad," he shouted. But the danger was not yet over, nor had the elephants recovered from their fright. As madly as ever they dashed along the rough road, at times swinging perilously near to the outer verge. In vain Raffles coaxed and threatened and pled the prod. Of their own accord the brutes took the turn toward the river, and swept the heavy gun carriage down the hill at a frightful speed. Bertie had all he could do to keep his seat. When the bottom of the hill was reached Raffles vainly tried to turn the elephants aside. They rushed madly forward, and clattered on over the narrow bridge which spanned the river. In mid-stream the frail structure gave way, and elephants and gun went through with a tremendous charge he was well nigh exhausted.

A score of horsemen were quickly on the spot among them Colonel Stratford, who had been a witness of the whole affair. As he clasped Bertie in his arms he looked at Raffles, and that look was a source of consolation in the gloomy days that followed. Of course the review was spoilt, for it took the rest of the day to get the elephants and the gun out of the river. That night, for seven succeeding nights, Raffles slept in his old cell. Then, instead of appearing before a court martial, he was reprimanded and discharged.

He afterwards had a private interview with the colonel and for a whole year he was the best behaved soldier in the cantonments.

Then the savages of the Chataquay hills revolted, and Raffles went eagerly off to war. It was a little bit of a war, but it was desperate enough for him to earn a corporal's stripes and the Victoria cross—which had been the ambition of his life.

Raffles attributes his good fortune to Bertie, and he is not far wrong.

AN EIGHT-MILE SLIDE.

An Adventure on Norwegian Skies—  
By Edward S. Ellis.

Many portions of the west and northwest are settled by Norwegians, Swedes and emigrants from other cold countries of Europe. These hardy, industrious people bring with them the habits, customs and manners of living of their native land, and there are villages where a word of English is rarely spoken. It is as if a section of the Scandinavian peninsula, with its people had been dropped into our country today.

In these regions where the snow lies to a depth of several feet for months at a time, and where it often drifts high enough to cover a house, the Norwegian



EIGHT MILE SLIDE.

snow shoe or sledge is a common means of locomotion.

The slide differs widely from the ordinary snow shoe seen in Canada and in some parts of our country. Instead of the sleds run on runners, like the toboggan, through which the particles of snow readily sift, the slide consists of one narrow runner, a dozen feet in length, with the front turned up like that of a sled. It is loaded with goods, somewhat after the manner of a sledge, and the bottom being very smooth, a man with a little practice can attain a good degree of speed in making his descent of a mountain side. It is often necessary to put on the brakes. This is done by sliding the runner into a hole in the snow. By bearing the weight upon the pole, it cuts a deep furrow in the snow between the sleds, and, unless the sled is braked, it will slide down the slope with a great deal of speed.

Last winter, when the snow lay fully six feet deep in level in Colorado, Alf Erickson, a Norwegian youth of 18 years, and as sturdy and powerful as a full-grown man, was braved about on his sled, morning to go to the top of Bear Ridge to learn what prospect there was of trapping and shooting the fur-bearing animals.

It was about eight miles to the crest of the ridge, and when he started early in the morning, with a lunch to serve him at midday, he expected to be at his home by sundown.

Of course all the labor of the journey lay in getting to the top of the ridge. When he started, he had a heavy load, and he was not far enough out of the way. He uttered a piercing scream as the heavy wheels rolled over his leg.

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more than once to check his descent. It was absolutely impossible to ascend by a direct line, so he continually "tacked," bearing first to the right and then far over to the left. The smoothness of the snow sometimes compelled such long tacks, but when he had made a fairly long haul, he found himself only a few feet above his starting point. Most of his descent he was actually lower.

From this it will be understood how laborious was the task which set him on his feet. He had to push and pull, and he was continually tacking. He was continually tacking. He was continually tacking.

And that is precisely the time it did take. It was crawling when at last he reached the crest so worn out that he could not have gone a dozen yards further. He had eaten his lunch long before and felt half famished, but he had discovered signs of the movement of the fur-bearing animals, and was well pleased, therefore, with the result of his day's work. He had learned what he had set out to learn, and was now prepared to return.

But never would he so utterly work out. Although little labor was involved in the arduous descent, he must keep his eyes wide open, and he must be constantly in steering clear of the few rocks and trees in his path.

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never, and I am pretty certain Fred has never so keenly enjoyed roughing it in these later days, as we did in those summer months when we used to sail about the bay for three or four days at a time, and then windward up or down the lake, in our crazy little sixteen-foot clinker cat, or put out for a cruise of a few days, only returning when our provisions were exhausted and the fish absolutely refused to bite.

I know that if we were forced to sail the cat, it would be a painful task, as was absolutely necessary then to keep our little cat afloat, we should do no small amount of grumbling. I am sure, too, that we would both think twice before going out of sight of land in such a rotten little cat.

But I must not blackguard the poor diminutive cat. She served us faithfully. The boat seems almost human. The memory now of her seems to be the memory of a friend of my younger days who has passed away.

But to return to the accident, or incident which I started out to recount. When the little "Masco" struggled through the crest of an unusually long sea and started down its steep slope with a rush, Fred suddenly pointed out the water a trifle to starboard of the course we were steering.

"What does that look like to you?" he exclaimed, "there now it grows plainer."

I looked in the direction he designated. "Why, it's a snake—or the 'Wanderer'." I sang back, naming a schooner yacht, then a new boat, that had been lost two summers ago near that very spot.

But, at that time, the darkish speck ahead in the fog resolved itself into quite clear outlines, for we must have been approaching it at the rate of five knots an hour, even under the pressure of the small rag of canvas the double reef left in our sail.

We saw, at once, that the little schooner was not from our harbor, and

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of the party quite audibly, and with some suspicion, that we were nothing but "two infants," and that it was luck for us that they had found us.

But what Fred lacked in size more than made up in assurance.

I always had an admiration for Fred's self-reliance. When he quietly took the wheel from the unsuspecting hands of the helmsman, and let the yacht fall off a bit, in order that she might gain sufficient headway before bringing her about, I was proud of him.

His cool assumption of authority rather reassured her owner and the others, too.

Yet, to pilot the leaking yacht into port safely, was to be a painful task, as was absolutely necessary then to keep our little cat afloat, we should do no small amount of grumbling. I am sure, too, that we would both think twice before going out of sight of land in such a rotten little cat.

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which meant that we were fast nearing the point where the natural harbor at Erie. I began to grow nervous.

The atmosphere was just as opaque as before, and the leak as fast becoming worse.

But still I had considerable confidence in my chum.

Then, suddenly, the dull stroke of the fog-bell came across the water! I have never heard that sound to my straining ear, that afternoon.

The reddish brown object that we shortly gazed at, and nearly over, exact position, down to a